

# Common Core Standards Fact Sheet

## Myths about the Common Core State Standards

### **Myth: The standards tell teachers what to teach.**

**Fact:** The best understanding of what works in the classroom comes from the teachers who are in them. That's why these standards will establish what students need to learn, but they will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards. They actually give teachers more flexibility and a common, general focus that allows teachers to exercise professional judgment in planning instruction.

### **Myth: The standards only include skills and do not address the importance of content knowledge.**

**Fact:** International benchmarking played a significant role in both mathematics and English language arts. The standards recognize that both content and skills are important.

In English language arts, the standards require certain critical content for all students, including: classic myths and stories from around the world, America's founding documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare.

Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are left to state and local determination. In addition to content coverage, the standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In mathematics, the standards lay a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals. Taken together, these elements support a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures. The

middle school and high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world issues and challenges; they prepare students to think and reason mathematically.

In addition, the standards set a rigorous definition of Career- and College-Readiness, not by piling topic upon topic, but by demanding that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees do regularly.

### **Myth: The standards will be implemented through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – signifying the federal government will be leading them.**

**Fact:** The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led voluntary effort that is not a requirement of NCLB and the adoption of the standards is in no way mandatory. States began the work to create clear, consistent standards before the Recovery Act or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act blueprint were released because this work is being driven by the needs of the states, not the federal government.

### **Myth: These standards amount to a national curriculum for our schools.**

**Fact:** The standards are not a curriculum. They are a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents and others will decide how the standards are to be met. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

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**Myth: The Common Core State Standards mean more testing.**

**Fact:** The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide a framework for instruction as well as for assessment, but the CCSS do not affect the requirements for state assessment. The only assessments required of schools are the summative tests required by No Child Left Behind: annual assessments in mathematics and English language arts in grades 3-8 and once in high school.

Michigan law also requires testing science and social studies once in elementary, once in middle school, and once in high school. All other testing is decided by the local school district.

**Myth: The Common Core State Standards are expensive to implement because of the price of professional development, aligning curriculum with the standards, and technology infrastructure upgrades.**

**Fact:** In Michigan, the demand for an educated workforce and the focus on improving schools are driving the demands for professional development and expanded technology infrastructures.

Aligning and updating curriculum is the responsibility of schools regardless of the standards used. The fact that multiple states are aligning to operate the same set of standards provides states and schools the opportunity to share resources, instructional materials, assessments, and professional development for teachers and administrators, resulting in economies of scale not possible before.

**MYTH: Home school parents and students are required to adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and develop a curriculum to align with the CCSS. In addition, the CCSS requires home school parents and students to register with the Michigan Department of Education.**

**FACT:** Home school parents /guardians and students are not required to adopt, develop a curriculum, or follow the Common Core State Standards.

Michigan Law governing compulsory attendance (MCL 380.1561) requires a parent or guardian to send a child to public school unless the child is being educated at the child's home by his or her parent or legal guardian or is being taught in a state-approved nonpublic school.

Home school education is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian. The above mentioned law and the rights of parents and guardians to educate their child in a home setting or at a nonpublic school did not change when the Michigan State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in June 2010.

In addition, the annual registration of a home school to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is voluntary. It is not required unless the student has special needs and is requesting special education services from the local public or intermediate school district. Again, this did not change with the adoption of the CCSS.